

To the Forest Chief

I would like to express my objections to the Draft Decision and FEIS of the Shoshone National Forest Plan. One of the primary stated objectives of the new Plan is to enhance and maintain the backcountry non-motorized character of this Forest. The decision to open Franc's Peak and Wood River to motorized use is in direct opposition to this objective. Motorized off-road use will have a negative impact on wildlife and their habitat, especially in the winter. More elk will be driven out of the foothills and onto ranchers' winter pasture, where there is already conflict. Other times of year grizzly and other sensitive species will be impacted. It's been proven that many animals begin to run at the first sound of motor vehicles, and that the area of avoidance around a motorized trail can be huge. Human impacts will be increased to archaeological resources, and the creation of new roads and trails will add to the erosion of these fragile volcanic soils.

The decision to protect much of the Absaroka Front from oil and gas surface occupancy is something that I applaud in the new Plan. The need to protect this wild area from industrialization is supported by the public. Motor vehicle use is inconsistent with landscape protection. All you need to do is go to the Bighorns to experience the degradation of Forest lands by motorized users. It's no longer a pleasure to camp in the front country of the Bighorns on account of the noise and dust from ATV "recreation". This kind of destruction should not be allowed on the currently roadless areas of the Shoshone.

A small vocal minority is advocating for expanding motorized use. The majority of Wyomingites, and an even larger majority of out-of-staters support keeping a few wild, unroaded areas left so that people can hike and camp and experience Nature in a primitive environment. These last wild places are fast disappearing. The experience of silence is disappearing. The experience of solitude is disappearing. There is motor vehicle access to most places in Wyoming. Let's save the few remaining National Forest areas that don't already have motorized use on them for future generations. There will be plenty of opportunities in the future to choose to increase vehicular access. However, once the roads are there, it will be hard to go back to a primitive state. Leave some options for the next generation. Follow the original objective of the Forest Plan and maintain the backcountry non-motorized character of the Shoshone National Forest.

Sincerely,

Linda Raynolds, Cody, Wyoming